

**Item 6**  
**Fiscal Year 2014-15**  
**Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program**  
**Award Recommendations**  
**(Action Item)**

June 30, 2015

## **Staff Recommendation:**

Approve awarding \$4,601,345 million in Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to 12 projects supporting greenhouse gas reductions and related co-benefits, and approve alternate easement project (Butte County) in the event funding becomes available

# Strategic Growth Council

\$130 million (2014-15 Budget) from Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund  
for investments in land use and transportation-oriented strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

## Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities

\$120 million administered by Dept. of Housing and Community Development

### Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation

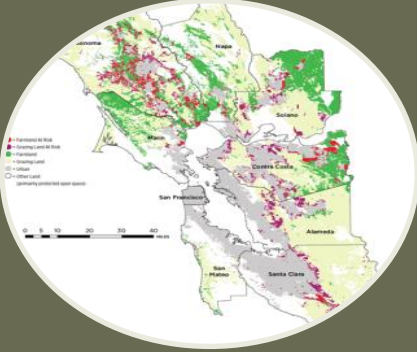
\$5 million administered by the Department of Conservation  
for agricultural land preservation projects

# SALC Program Goals

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide other co-benefits
- Focus on agricultural lands most critical/ most at risk of conversion to non-agricultural uses
- Leverage investments to maximize opportunities for partnerships among entities.



# SALC Program Structure: 3 Elements



## Strategy

up to \$1 million  
to identify critical ag  
lands at risk of  
conversion.

## Easements

up to \$4 million to  
permanently protect  
lands

## Management Practices

Future Years of the  
Program

Linked elements that together improve land use practices throughout California

## What we did in FY 2014-15:

✓	<b>JULY 2014</b>	<b>Strategic Growth Council tasks DOC/CNRA with Ag Protection Program</b>
✓	<b>Late Summer/Early Fall</b>	<b>Held Stakeholder Sessions to Solicit Input on Program Design</b>
✓	<b>SEPTEMBER 2014</b>	<b>Released SALC Draft Guidelines for Public Review &amp; Comment</b>
✓	<b>OCTOBER 2014</b>	<b>Held Public Workshops on Draft Guidelines (Butte, Watsonville, Bakersfield)</b>
✓	<b>JANUARY 9, 2014</b>	<b>Released Draft Final Guidelines</b>
✓	<b>JANUARY 20, 2014</b>	<b>Final Guidelines Approved by the Strategy Growth Council</b>
✓	<b>JANUARY 21, 2015</b>	<b>Released Request for Projects</b>
✓	<b>SPRING 2015</b>	<b>Applications Due for SALC Projects – Strategy Grants and Easement Grants</b>
✓	<b>Late Spring/Early Summer 2015</b>	<b>Applications Reviewed and Recommendations for Award Prepared</b>
	<b>JUNE 30, 2015</b>	<b>Strategic Growth Council Considers SALC Program Awards</b>

# Agricultural Land Strategies

- Up to \$1 million available
- Received \$880,085 in requests from 10 applicants.
- Recommending approval of 5 projects, totaling \$492,495.

# Project Snapshot – Ag Land Strategies

## **Mendocino County Agricultural Land Conservation Planning Program**

GHG benefit: protects ag lands from conversion to more GHG-intensive purposes.

### Goals:

- ✓ Increase Williamson Act enrollments on “Important Farmland”
- ✓ Increase capacity of local land trust to expand ACE programs
- ✓ Prioritize acquisitions
- ✓ Increase technical assistance to ag community to foster beneficial management practices to mitigate GHG emissions

Partners with Mendocino County: Mendocino County Resource Conservation District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; UC Cooperative Extension; Mendocino County Food Policy Council; Mendocino County Farm Bureau; and regional land trusts.



# Project Snapshot – Ag Land Strategies

## **Butte County Agricultural Land Conservation Strategy Plan**

GHG benefit: protects ag lands from conversion to more GHG-intensive purposes, and implements a model sustainable farm program.

### Goals:

- ✓ Develop a priority base map to identify ag lands at greatest risk of conversion
- ✓ Prepare Butte County Agricultural Land Strategy for support and approval by the County Board of Supervisors
- ✓ Build on County's Climate Action Plan, General Plan update, Zoning Ordinance and Draft Ag Mitigation Ordinance.
- ✓ Develop framework of best practices that sustain agricultural resources to reduce GHG emissions.

Partners with Butte County Farm Bureau; Butte County Cattlemen/Women; Farm Advisors Office, City and County Planning Staff; Butte County Association of Governments; USDA/Farm Service; Butte County Resource Conservation District; Local Agency Formation Commission, local land trusts, ag water providers and irrigation districts; conservation and environmental interests, and developer interests.

# **Agricultural Land Conservation Easements**

## ***Preproposals\****

- 33 Pre-proposals received, totaling \$16.5 M in GGRF requests
- Many applicants submitted multiple pre-proposals, asking for guidance on strongest projects

# **Agricultural Land Conservation Easements**

## ***Full Proposals\****

- 10 complete applications received, totaling \$6.8 M in GGRF fund requests
- \$17.7 M in estimated conservation easement value
- Applications would conserve 15,192 acres

# Agricultural Land Conservation Easements

## Funding Recommendations

- 7 conservation easement projects, totaling \$4.1 M in GGRF
- \$13.0 M in estimated conservation easement value
- Easements conserving 14,151 acres, approx. 20% irrigated, 80% rangeland

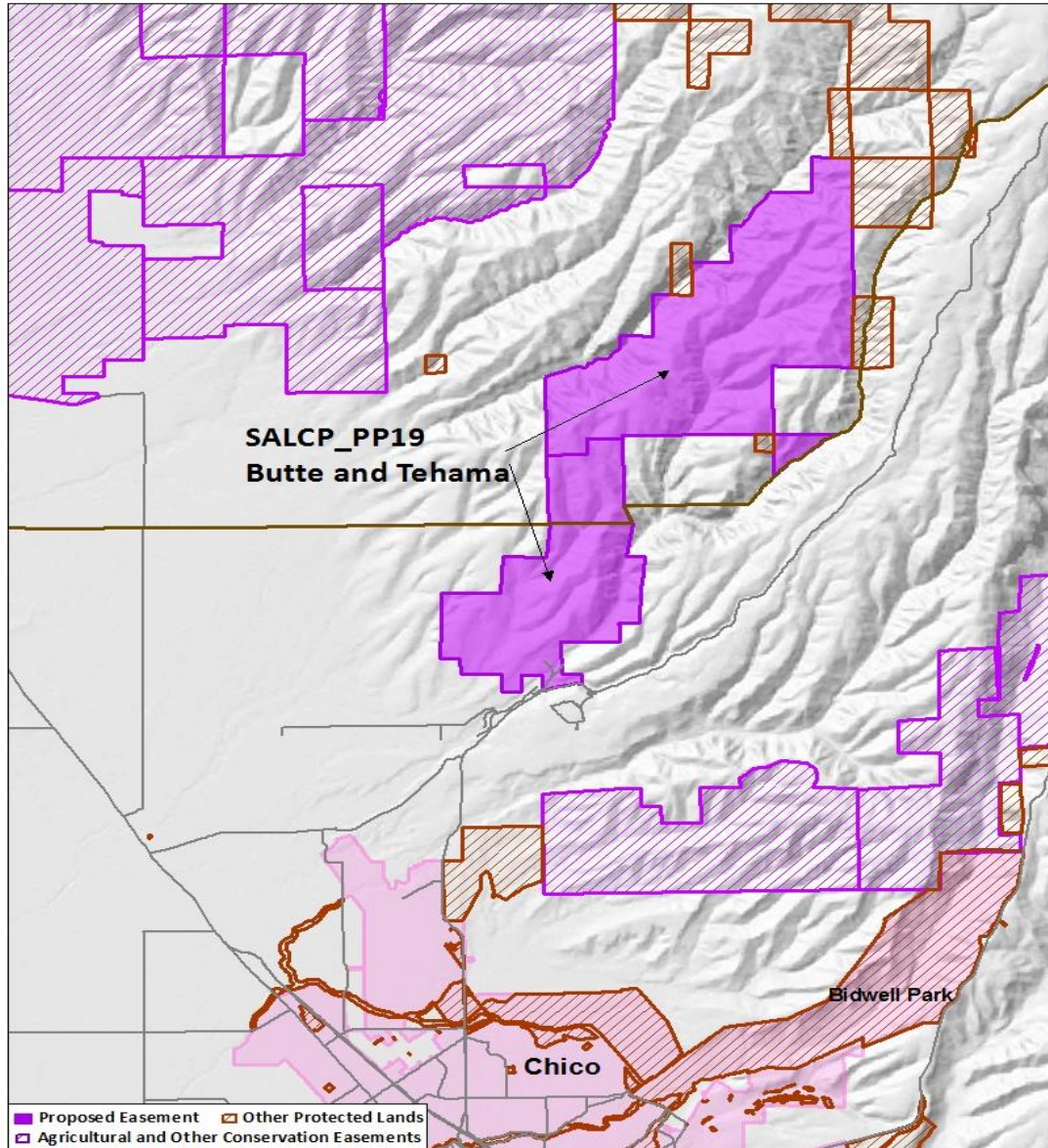
# Project Snapshots: Easements



**Monterey County, 129 acres**  
1 mile from the City of Salinas  
*CO<sub>2</sub> estimated reduction:*  
*1,316 metric tons.<sup>1</sup>*  
*Prime vegetable growing area*



# Project Snapshots: Easements

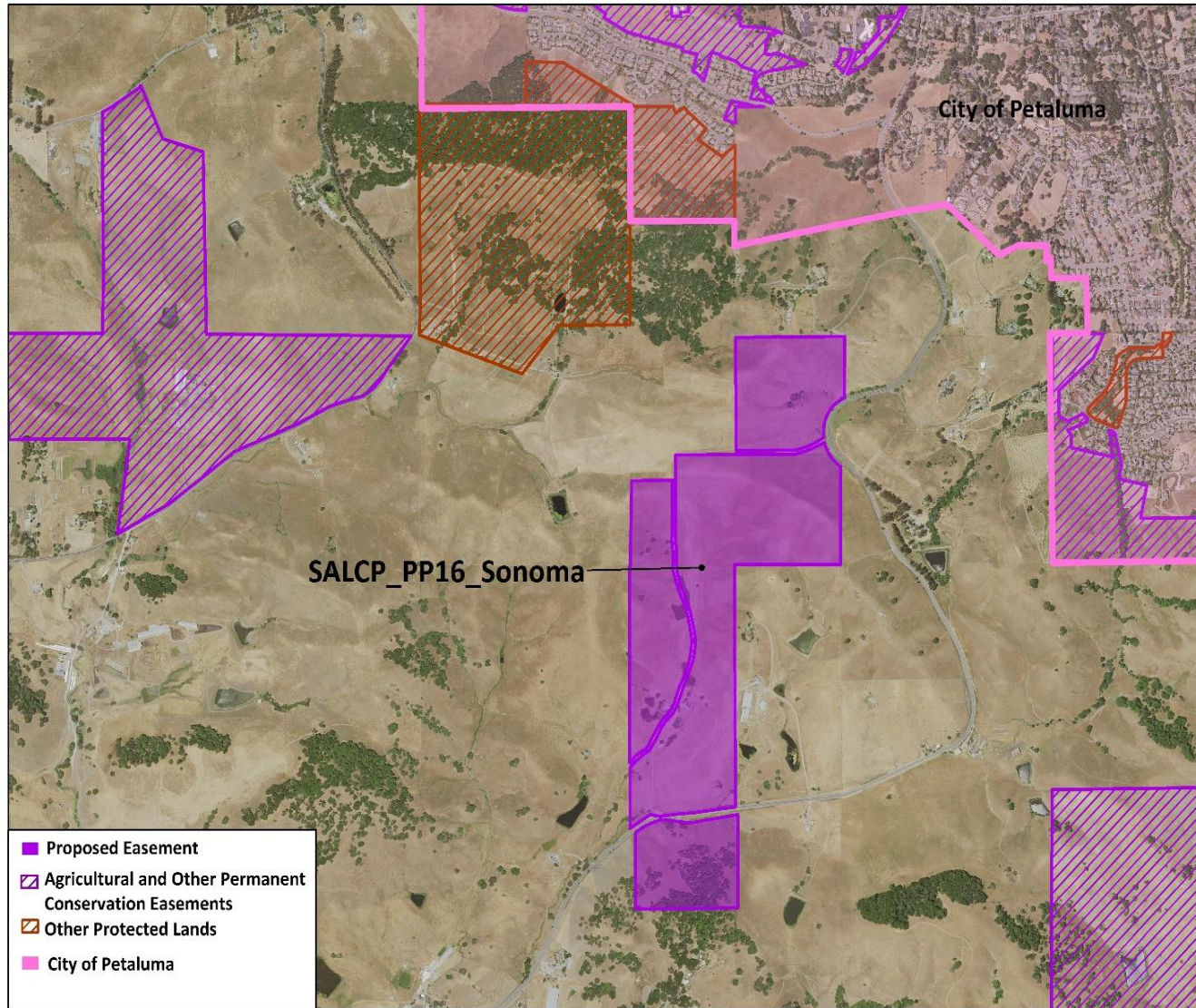


**Butte & Tehama counties, 8,847 acres**  
2.5 miles from the City of Chico's SOI  
*CO<sub>2</sub> estimated reduction:*  
*19,388 metric tons.<sup>1</sup>*

*Considered critical rangeland by California  
Rangeland Conservation Coalition*



# Project Snapshots: Easements



**Sonoma County, 230 acres**

½ mile from the City of Petaluma

*CO<sub>2</sub> estimated reduction:*

*6,185 metric tons.<sup>1</sup>*

*High priority community separator*

## Next Steps

- With Council approval of the staff recommendation, staff will begin preparing grant agreements for approved projects.
- SALC Program staff will begin to prepare for the fiscal year 2015-16 grant round, which will include review of existing programmatic grant guidelines.
- SALC Program staff will present a work plan and timeline for 2015-16 program implementation at the next Council meeting.



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# THANK YOU

Julie Alvis, Deputy Assistant Secretary  
California Natural Resources Agency

John Lowrie, Assistant Director  
California Department of Conservation

# Questions & Public Comment